

To the Parliament of England, and the
several Members thereof.

FRIENDS,

ON the day of your last solemn Fast and Humiliation, which was on the third day of this ~~first~~ month 1659. I told you in the Name of God, who then moved me so to do, that you cannot possibly prosper in your Councils, nor be accepted in your sacrifices, if before him you be found guilty of forswearing your selves, which whether you are or no in that tedious Case of *Tithes*, I then also warned you to consider: I have since that seen such necessity laid upon me from the Lord this once more to arise and contend on the Lords behalf, who hath a Controversie with you, O ye mountains, and yestrong foundations of the earth, that whatever should befall me from you for so doing, yet wo is unto me from him if I do it not: in order to the clearing of my Conscience in which service, and in obedience to him, whose Spirit hath prest me to it, and also in bowels of true love to all your Souls, and tender compassion to this bleeding Nation, I have here presented you with these few following Queries, which you are to read in the fear of the Lord, and in the light of God, that shines into all Souls, and searches the secrets of all your hearts, to answer to God himself in your own Consciences.

1. Whether have you not said, vowed, covenanted and sworn, and caused this Nation to vow, covenant and swear with hands lifted up to the most High God, to endeavor to the utmost of your, and their power the Extirpation of all Innovation in Religion, Popish institution, superstition, &c. and to Reform according to the example of the best Reformed Churches?

2. Whether *Parish-Churches*, *Parish-Priests*, and the *Parish-pay* by that way of *Tithes* (which was the Ordinance of God under the Law, which together with the Priesthood thereof is now changed) be not *Superstitious*, *Innovations* and *Institutions* of the *Pope*, imposing the establishment thereof by their civil Laws upon simple *Priest-Ridden* Princes, Powers and Parliaments, in the dark dayes of his undue dominion over

them in this *English Nation*, and that so unquestionably, that none of you, but such as are willingly so, can in these times of Trying of all things be easily ignorant of it?

3. Whether it be any leſſthen curſed *Covenant breaking*, and palpable *Perjury* in your ſelves, or any that have ſo vowed, covenanted and ſworn as aforeſaid, nor to endeavour the extirpation aforeſaid, much more in ſtead of removing that *Papiſh yoke of Tiſhes* to re-eſtabliſh the payment of it with *Treble dammages*?

4. Whether you may not be ſaid ſo to re-eſtabliſh it, when-as notwithstanding the onely way and means of recovery of *Tiſhes*, that ever ſtood by *Law* in this Nation, which was that of the *Spiritual Courts* (there being an expels Statute yet extant unrepealed, that it ſhall not be lawful for any man to be ſummoned before any *Secular Judge*, or ſued in any *Temporal Court* in that matter) is (*de jure*) taken away already in the fall of the *Biſhops Hierarchy*, and of the ſaid *Spiritual Courts*, you nevertheless encourage the *Judges*, by your *Orders* and *Ordinances* to try that Caſe of *Tiſhes* in their *Temporal Courts*, who do accordingly ſo ſtrictly reinforce the payment of *Tiſhes*, that ſuch tender conſciences as becauſe of the *Oaths* and *Vowes* to God you have bound them in, and to avoid the guilt of *Perjury*, dare not pay them, by ſuch *Hungry Harpies* and *Greedy Gatherers* as the *Pariſh-preachers* make uſe of, have not onely *Treble*, but ſometimes *Tenfold* dammages forcibly wreſted from them: which ſaid *Judges*, in ſo much as they are alſo ſworn (*as Judges*) not to Act againſt any Statute Law, whether in ſo acting they are not doubly ſorſworn, 'tis good for them timely to examine?

5. Whether the *Apoſtles*, who came after *Tiſhes*, who were to go into all Nations, Miniſtring the *Gofpel*, did ever make ſuch complaint for *Tiſhes*, as the Miniſters of the Nations now do to *Magiſtrates*? And whether was there not proviſion enough for them, not by compulſion, nor yet by *Tiſhes*, but as love conſtrained, by which they then miniſtered one to another, though they were ſcattered up and down through many Nations, whereas theſe *Miniſters* ſettle themſelves in *Pariſhes*, for *Term-of-life*? And whether is it not more according to the example of the beſt *Reformed Churches*, which are thoſe of the *Primitive times*, as well as a more likely way to end that endleſſ

less strife, which to the stark stinking shame of their profession, and to the wearying of the whole Nation the men called *Ministers* are together by the ears in with all manner of people, to leave all manner of people freely to chuse, and freely to maintain the *Ministers* of their own chusing, and all *Ministers* freely to give out what freely they have received, according to Christs Command, to such as he sends them, then to force the *Flocks* of other folds to feed and cloath such *Hireling* *Shepherds*, as they neither hire, nor hear, nor were ever fed by, and against their own consciences to help to uphold such *Steal-Sermons*, and *Sell-Sermons* as *God* neither sent nor spoke to, and such *Seers* concerning whom they see the *Sun* is already set upon them?

6. Whether it be possibly to be expected (unless *God* himself be so changed as to take pleasure in iniquity) that *God* should take pleasure in this Nation, or that the Parliament, and people thereof should ever prosper truly into a *Common-Wealth*, and not rather perish at last by some *Common Wo*, ruine and calamity, if it be found before him in the cases aforesaid, under the guilt of those gross sins of covenant breaking and perjury?

7. Whether it be possible (unlesse *God* be changed from what he was of old) that your many prayers should enter into the ears of the Lord of hosts, that your fastings and humiliations (which are but fained if you turn not to him that smites you with all your hearts) should find acceptance with him, that your most solemn meetings should meet with any thing but refection as *iniquity* and *hypocrisie*, and that he should deliver you in your callings upon him in this day of your trouble, if he find you guilty of falshood, and forswearing yourselves, if you perform not to the Lord your *Oaths*, & pay not your *Vows* unto the most high? and whether were it not much better for you to hearken then hastily to offer, or to obey then to sacrifice with your hands full of blood?

8. Whether it be a sufficient plea before *God* in the cases aforesaid for this *Parliament* to say that the land cannot bear the taking away of *Tithes*, as if the perfect removal of the *Popes* *yoke* from off their necks and the return of *Tithes* to the people, who are the right Original owners thereof, and might at first keep them to themselves, till *doting Doctors* deceived them
into

(4)
into a bestowing thereof, or might bestow them on the poor, or on whom they pleased till *P. Innocent* the third imposed the payment of them to *Parish priests*, were insufferable to the *Saints*, unsafe to a Nation that perfectly *protests* against the *Pope* and all his *impositions*; or as if any but the blind *Popishly affected party* that are your flattering foes, or any of that *well affected party* who have been your constant friends; whom you have engaged to live and die with in so good a cause, would kick, and fling, and be impatient under the burthen of their own freedoms?

9. Whether would not the breaking of every such *Popish yoke* from off their Consciences encourage all the *aforesaid well-affected party*, so as to knit them firmly to you; And whether doth it not rather discourage and weaken their hearts and hands to youward upon any occasion, when assistance from them is expected, to see all their *Hopes* frustrated, all your *Vows*, *Oaths* and *Covenants* disregarded, your *Promises* falsified, and their *Petitions* and *Propositions* to you in the particular *aforesaid* slighted, or at best answered with only thanks for their good affections, and assurances that the things desired are under Consideration, when yet from time to time that which by *Oath* and *Covenant* should have been long since *Removed*, by your new *Orders* and *Ordinances* for it stands still rather *Re-established*?

10. Whether the *Parish Priesthood* of this Nation, who are *well*, neither full nor fasting, do deserve that this Parliament should make such provision for them, as they do, and take so much care as they have done for their *Tithes*, when as both now, and upon every occasion, as well when things go well with them, as when worse, they are ready to arise up in *Armes* against you with any *discontented*, whether *Kingly*, *Priestly* or *Popish party*, to the eminent endangering of the whole *Common-wealth*, the infinite expending and exhausting of the *Treasure* thereof, the *Imbroiling* of this Nation in new War, till it welter in its own *blood*, and contrary to the *Scripture*, which wills all *Ministers* to be no *Strikers*, imbruing their own hands in the *innocent blood* thereof?

Given out on the 10th day
of the 6th month, 1659.

Samuel Fisher.

THE END.

r,
he
he
ne
ly
ell
ou
ld
cir
if
id
nd
cir
li-
a-
ur
in
th
he
ne
en
it
re
nt
ke
as
go
in
ly,
he
ng
ew
the
ing